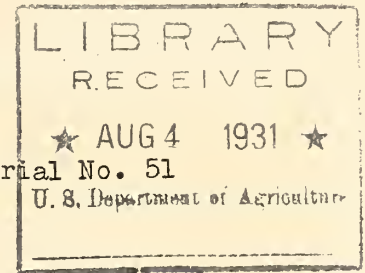
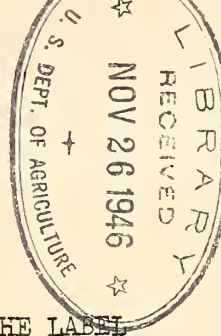


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Excerpt from a radio talk by
W. W. Vincent, chief, western district,
Food and Drug Administration, U. S.
Department of Agriculture, delivered
through KGO, San Francisco, and associated
NBC stations, July 30, 1931.



HOW TO READ THE LABEL

Tricky Labels

The Federal food and drugs act demands upon the label of all packaged foods a statement of net contents. Such other statements as appear upon the package labels must be true to fact, otherwise the product is misbranded under the law. Perhaps it is unfortunate, but the law does not go so far as to require fully informative labels. Labels must be truthful, but the law does not insist that they carry all the information an inquisitive housewife might be expected to seek. The omissions of which I speak--- and this is general on canned fruits and vegetables--- are the declarations as to quality, variety and condition of contents. Housewives could get that information placed on labels if they would be more exacting in their demands and buy only brands of which they knew the grade, or only material upon which grade and variety declarations are made. Be suspicious of coined names sounding of the genuine and whose spelling is a play upon the genuine. "Vanillex" will not be a true vanilla extract; "Mapillex" will not be a true maple extract; nor will "Cherriola" be a pure cherry juice. Nine times out of 10, products labeled comparable with the illustrations given will be imitation products artificially colored and flavored with synthetic flavors. The law requires the labels of such products to show that they are imitations. Scrutinize the label and you will not be misled into buying one of these articles in the mistaken belief that it is a natural flavor.

Brand names may be misleading if carelessly read without reference to other informative matter carried by the label. Some of the following, in my opinion, were conceived with intent to deceive the careless, the ignorant and the too-trusting buyer:

"Tiny Teddy Brand" appeared on canned string beans which were not nearly so immature as the word "Tiny" might imply. The words, "Red Rambler," "Rēd Iris," and "Red Buck" have appeared on cans of salmon which yielded, upon examination, Pink Salmon and Coho Salmon--- species usually selling for less money than Red salmon. The phrase "All White Meat" appeared upon the label of a product packed by a nationally known distributor of tuna. The conventional picture of a fish bore the word, "Bonita," if the careful reader chose to see it. You will need to be a careful label reader if you are going to receive tuna. Many labels of "Asparagus Soup Cut," that product generally containing about one tip to two butt pieces, bear vignettes portraying luscious bunches of whole asparagus or neat bunches of tips. The words, "Soup Cuts," or "Center Cut Asparagus," must not be overlooked, however.

Another trick of labeling--- and this has been quite general--- is to portray upon labels of products, originally produced in foreign countries but now produced here in volume, pictures of foreign places known to everyone, with perhaps the label done in foreign colors and bearing foreign flags. Macaroni, olive oil, tonno, and tomato paste have been deceptively labeled

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in this respect. On packaged oils, the term, "Olio Pure," does not signify olive oil, even though the label design might imply it to be such. A number of such labels have been encountered where qualifying statements appear in places that are not prominent, and here you find the product is "Pure Olive Oil blended with high quality vegetable oils," or else it may be Pure Vegetable Oil," either peanut, corn or cottonseed, and merely "flavored with olive oil." Innumerable legal actions have been directed against labels of this character.

A product labeled as "Korean Crab," with the statement, "From the frigid deep blue waters of the North," and perhaps portraying a Japanese fishing scene, is not the canned Japanese crab with which you are all familiar. The term "Korean Crab" represents a distinct species which is generally considered inferior.

Some firms or corporations include the name of a State in the firm or company name, or show upon their labels the location of only their home office. Since these large companies often pack their material in a number of States, you can not be certain of locality where produced unless the label actually tells you.

Another trick of labeling is to add a word to a product name, thereby giving an unwarranted significance to the name. "Pineapple Hearts" has appeared upon pineapple cores, and certainly cores are not the superior product which the term "Pineapple Hearts" might imply.

Always look for the net-contents statement. Remember, that is one thing made mandatory by the food and drugs act. If the statement is in very small type or otherwise inconspicuously placed upon the label, look twice and then think a moment. What are you paying per pound?

Remember, now, the practices illustrated represent the practices of the minority. They are largely confined to the unethical manufacturer--- who is in the minority. The great majority of food manufacturers are proud of their products--- proud of their labels. And the Food and Drug Administration is whittling away at these occasional tricky labels. I have urged you to read labels, study them, become a discriminating buyer; then you help not only yourself but the honest manufacturer as well. If you will do that, the Food and Drug Administration will not have labored in vain and W. W. Vincent will be gratified if he has contributed to your benefit.